



– For Immediate Release –

Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2009

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IIMPACT Detectives Arrest Four Suspects at Phoenix Drop House

On Monday, Jan. 26, 2009, Detectives from the Illegal Immigration Prevention & Apprehension Co-op Team (IIMPACT) arrested four suspects at a Phoenix area drop house. The suspects were holding five undocumented aliens against their will to extort additional payment for their release at 5647 South 10th Street in Phoenix. (IIMPACT is explained on Page 2 of this news release.)

Phoenix Police Department received a 9-1-1 phone call from a citizen around 9:00 a.m. on Monday who advised he was approached by a man and woman who had a small child with them and advised they needed help because they had just escaped from the South 10th Street residence. The two explained how they were forcibly being held against their will by four people who wanted an additional \$7,500 for their release. They had initially paid \$7,500 to be transported to California. They escaped when the suspects fell asleep and were found walking around in a parking lot by the citizen, which was not too far from the residence.

Phoenix PD Officers arrived on scene, interviewed the couple and took the three of them into protective custody. Based on the information received, Phoenix PD personnel went to the residence, conducted an entry and arrested the four suspects and located two other undocumented aliens who were being held. The other two aliens were originally destined for Washington State. It is not known how much they initially paid and how much more money the second couple was ordered to pay for their release.

IIMPACT Detectives were notified of the incident, arrived on scene and conducted an investigation. A Search Warrant was obtained and executed for the residence which is a two-story, three-bedroom, three-bath single-family structure. Detectives seized one 9mm handgun which was used to intimidate the victims. The five victims, all from Mexico, believed they had only been at the residence for a day.

Media Inquiries:

Arizona Department of Public Safety

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Suspects: (Note: The spelling of the names are unique for three of the suspects.)

Aracely Espinoca-Hernandez, age 29, Mexican national
Samuel Lopez-Galvez, age 31, Mexican national
Stixto Sandoval-Gonzales, age 31, Mexican national
Lember Billagran-Morales, age 24, Mexican national

All four were booked in the 4th Avenue Jail and charged with:

Kidnapping
Extortion
Human Smuggling
Assault
Misconduct with Weapons.

Note: Eight photos are attached:

Victims: Photos #001, #008
Suspects: Photos #002, #003, #005, #006
Residence: Photos #010, #012

End

IIMPACT is composed of the Phoenix Police Department (PPD), U.S. Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Arizona Fraudulent Identification Task Force (AFIT) and the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS). IIMPACT was formed over a year ago and is a project managed by the Gang Immigration and Intelligence Team Enforcement Mission (GIITEM), a multi-agency task force administered by the Arizona Department of Public Safety. IIMPACT was designed to investigate crimes involving extreme violence; such as kidnap, rape, homicide, assault, extortion, home invasions, hi-jacking and the overall disregard for human life associated with the serious problems of human smuggling. The overall goal of IIMPACT is to make Arizona communities safer by deterring, disrupting and dismantling the criminal organizations operating through the apprehension and prosecution of those involved.

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